

McClellan went before White House reporters and told the world he talked with Karl Rove, Elliot Abrams and Lewis Libby, and that each of three had assured him that they were not involved.

And so now the question is, was Karl Rove withholding information from his colleagues at the White House about his involvement in the Valerie Plame scandal? Or did the White House know, and did they send out erroneous and false statements to the media?

It would be nice if the White House would answer these questions, but now the White House refuses to comment on any issue regarding the ongoing investigation. Yesterday reporters tried to ask Scott McClellan whether or not he would stand by the statement he made back in 2003 in which he stated that Karl Rove had told him he was not involved. And McClellan said he could no longer comment on the investigation. How convenient, Mr. Speaker, that McClellan was able to vouch for Rove back in 2003 but is silent today.

So today we are left are two possibilities really. 1, the White House has been bending the truth on this very serious issue since the beginning, or 2, Karl Rove has misrepresented his involvement to the White House. Either way, Karl Rove has a lot of explaining to do. And I believe, Mr. Speaker, that President Bush should stand behind his past statement and ask Karl Rove to either defend his actions or resign.

#### DRAWDOWN OF FORCES IN IRAQ

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MEEHAN) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. MEEHAN. Mr. Speaker, this weekend many of us learned that the Bush Administration may have a plan for a phased drawdown of coalition forces in Iraq in the next 12 to 18 months.

Unfortunately, we did not learn about these plans from the Administration's legally mandated yet unfulfilled reporting requirements to Congress. We learned about it from news reports of a leaked memo circulating in the British government.

The memo outlines the Administration's plan to cut the size of our force in Iraq from 140,000 down to 66,000 by the middle of next year, and describes a "strong U.S. military desire" to hand over control to the Iraqi security forces in most of Iraq.

In January I released a white paper in which I proposed a timetable for a phased drawdown of the majority of American troops by the end of 2006. If the information in the British memo is true, then the Administration may be planning similar plans, despite its public claims to the contrary.

Ironically, the British memo, reportedly written at least a month ago, broke in the American press at exactly

the same moment that the Administration missed a very important deadline to share precisely this sort of information with this Congress.

There is something wrong when we are learning about the Administration's plans for our troops, not from the President, not from the Pentagon, but from leaked foreign memos. Yesterday the Pentagon should have released to Congress an essential report on the benchmarks and guidelines for measuring progress in Iraq.

The report for "Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq" was a provision of the Supplemental Defense Appropriations Bill passed by this Congress and signed into law by President Bush on May 11, 2005. This law required the Administration to outline a comprehensive approach to Iraq by July 11, yesterday, with follow-up reports every 90 days thereafter.

This report presents an invaluable opportunity for the administration to explain to Congress and to the American people their plans and intentions in Iraq. Providing Congress with a more comprehensive set of performance indicators will undoubtedly lead to a more informed debate over U.S. policy in Iraq.

The congressionally mandated report calls on the Administration to outline key measures of stability and security in Iraq. This includes measurements of political stability, the training of Iraqi forces. Specifically, the report mandates that the Administration provide information on the operational readiness status of the Iraqi military forces, including the type, number, size and organizational structure of Iraqi battalions, as well as their ability to conduct counterinsurgency operations.

The report requirement also calls for estimates of the strength of the Iraqi insurgency and details on the training of the Iraqi police force.

I urge the Administration to take this responsibility seriously and to take this legal obligation seriously by providing this information to Congress as quickly and as comprehensively as possible.

The information contained in this report is a critical step towards bringing our troops home. To that end, I am a cosponsor of House Resolution 55, the Homeward Bound Act. This bipartisan legislation requires the President to announce a plan by December 31 of this year for the eventual return of all elements of the Armed Forces. This plan would be a natural extension of the report due to this body yesterday.

The bill also requires the President to begin a drawdown of our troops on or before October 1, 2006. Beyond that date, it provides the President with the flexibility for an orderly drawdown.

Finally, the legislation requires the President to accelerate the training of Iraqi forces and to ensure that they are adequate to take the leading role in fighting the insurgency.

Our troops have done everything we have asked of them in Iraq. They have

acted heroically. They have done their job. Now is the time for Washington to do its job.

#### RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until 10 a.m. today.

Accordingly (at 9 o'clock and 22 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess until 10 a.m.

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#### AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. FOLEY) at 10 a.m.

#### PRAYER

Rabbi David Greene, Chabad-Lubavitch, Rochester, Minnesota, offered the following prayer:

Almighty God, Master of the Universe, according to the Jewish tradition, You instructed mankind to obey seven universal laws:

not to worship false Gods;  
never to blaspheme Your Holy Name;  
not to murder;  
not to commit adultery, incest, or any sexual misdeeds;  
not to steal, lie, or cheat;  
not to be cruel to any living creature;

and that every society govern by just laws based on the recognition of You, O God, as a sovereign ruler of all men and all nations.

Today the Members of this House convene to fulfill one of these commandments, to govern by just laws. May it be Your will that those assembled here enact laws to govern this great country, be mindful of Your presence and conduct themselves in all their matters with justice, kindness, and peace.

Grant them success in making this country truly fit for Your presence. Bless them with good health, wisdom, compassion, good cheer, and fellowship. Amen.

#### THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

#### PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. GUTKNECHT) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. GUTKNECHT led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.